



Harlands Primary School

Striving for excellence, valuing everyone and our world

THE TRUSTEES OF HARLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL HAYWARDS HEATH

MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, 17 September 2025 at 7.00pm in School

PRESENT: Charlotte Blake, Jennie Doyle, Dave Brooks, Will Durham, Russell Goodrum, Debra Hollingum, David McKeown-Webster, David Nisbet, Mark Pawson, Chris Robbins, Yasmin Shepherd and Michael Swiggs (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE: Andy Colgate (Staff Voice)
Rocky Datto (Associate Trustee)
Karen Michael (Governance Professional/Clerk)
Sally Nixey (Deputy Head)

1 **Apologies for absence** had been received from Frank Gainsbury and Abi Dudley.

The following **declarations of interest** should be noted:

Jennie Doyle	Child at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Dave Brooks	Children at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Russell Goodrum	Child at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Debra Hollingum	Children at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee
Karen Michael (Clerk)	Headteacher's PA/Office Manager
Chris Robbins	Child at Harlands, but not a Parent Trustee

2 The **Chair of Trustees** welcomed everyone with a reminder about familiarising themselves with KCSIE 2025 part 1, noting that the main changes this year related to mis/disinformation online, and the terminology around autism.

3 **Administrative Matters**

(a) Updates to the Register of Business Interests were confirmed (*this would now been published on the school website as required*), and the Code of Conduct for 2025/26 would be adopted, subject to the inclusion of an additional sentence in the section on confidentiality and IT security, to note that Trustees should not enter anything naming Harlands in chatGBT or similar AI apps.

(b) Both the Harlands General Scheme of Delegation and the Financial Scheme of Delegation were adopted, alongside the revised Competitive Tendering Policy and Financial Procedures manual which had also been reviewed by the Finance Manager to ensure they were all using the same terminology.

Trustees queried why *there was a reduction in the threshold for tendering*. Having checked with the Finance Manager post the meeting, it was confirmed that the threshold had been lowered in the Procurement Act 2023, which came into force in

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February 2025. Trustees also asked *why there were separate Audit & Risk and Resources Committees*. Post meeting the Finance Manager confirmed that these can be combined, but as recommended by the Chair of the Audit & Risk committee, it was agreed that the two would remain separate as they looked at different aspects.

- (c) The Terms of Reference and Committee Structure were also adopted, though the section within the Terms of Reference on Links would be amended to reflect the new Ofsted framework (see item 7 below). The Chair also noted that an external adviser would be arranged for the Headteacher's Performance Review.
- (d) Trustee appointments/succession planning – the Chair advised that he was regularly sharing "chair's business" with the Chairs of the Resources and SIC Committees, and would be happy to include anyone else who might be interested in taking on a vice/chair role. Trustees would find it helpful to have an outline of the main Chair's role; the Governor Professional advised that both the vice and full chair roles could be split, though obviously there would need to be good communication between any two individuals sharing a role, and a clear demarcation of responsibility. See also item 7 below.

4 There were no **urgent matters**.

5 The **minutes** of the meeting held on Thursday, 8 July 2025 were agreed, subject to a small change to the declarations of interest.

6 **Matters arising**

- The Headteacher's communication around *smart phones* had been well received by parents. It was notable that the number of children in year 6 bringing phones to school this year was significantly lower, thought in to be because the cohort had already become used to walking to school in year 5, but without being able to bring a phone.
- *Guided assessment meeting* – **ACTION: to be arranged, Headteacher/Chair of SIC**
- *Equality policy* – this was awaiting some final tweaks, but would be ready shortly.
ACTION: Headteacher
- *Succession planning* – see item 7 below

7 **Headteacher's update**

Highlights from the start of term included:

- The children had settled well, including those with SEN
- The Receptionist position was currently being back-filled by Teaching Assistants as the appointed candidate had pulled out; a new advert had been placed
- As Trustees will have seen from the first newsletter this year, a former cloakroom had now been converted into an additional teaching space
- The footpath at the side of the school (to Penland Green) had been resurfaced
- Attendance was high at 96.7% versus 95% national
- A bronze autism award had now been granted, with WSCC noting good support for children, the low arousal environment, and the sensory room
- Staff had been updated on safeguarding matters, with particular emphasis on the local context, vulnerable children and peer pressure. Staff were very pro-active in reporting any concerns
- Consistent expectations were becoming embedded
- One complaint had been received (at the very end of the summer term); there were no racial incidents

The Headteacher then shared information about the new Ofsted Report Card, details of which had been released earlier this month. This placed a greater emphasis on vulnerable learners (EAL, SEN, Pupil Premium), reflecting the wider national situation with special needs. There would be implications for both SLT and Trustees, including parental engagement, inclusion (which should show our SEN story), and well-being for staff.

The new Report Card would cover the areas below, with the Headteacher advising that his regular Headteacher update, which had taken the format of the old SEF, would now cover these headings:

- *Safeguarding* – high standards/developments eg looking at low level behaviour
- *Inclusion* – analysis of SEN including case studies, inclusive classrooms and racial literacy
- *Curriculum and teaching* – as before, with adaptive teaching
- *Achievement* – data review, challenge for all across all subjects
- *Attendance and behaviour* – low level repeat offenders, consistency of consequences
- *Personal development and well-being* – for both children and staff, including enrichment and community opportunities
- *Leadership and governance* – finance, subject leader development, parental engagement (eg EAL, new arrivals)
- *EYFS* – more opportunities for continuous provision

Trustees asked a number of questions.

Would the new format be of benefit or more work? The point that inclusion was more to the forefront was good, and the Headteacher was willing to work with the new framework; however, it was noted that the teaching unions were not happy, even though there had been extensive consultation.

Was it definitely going to be implemented? The plan was that from November it would be used in state schools, from December for other schools that had volunteered to use it, then from January 2026 applicable to all schools.

When was the next Ofsted inspection likely for Harlands? This was likely to be Spring 2027.

What were the new measures? Exceptional, strong standard, expected standard, needs attention and urgent improvement.

It was suggested that it would therefore be appropriate to consider links for Trustees for each of the new specific Ofsted areas. Yasmin would be happy to take on EYFS, but Inclusion would need a couple of Trustees given the wide range it covered. **ACTION: Headteacher and Deputy Head to consider what links (and to which Committees) would be helpful.** The data review meeting to be arranged shortly might also throw up some issues.

In the light of the above, the Chair returned to the question of Trustee vacancies/succession planning, noting that whilst there were two reserve candidates from the previous recruitment process, the need was more for people with an interest in school improvement. Another consideration was the question of eg ethnic/EAL trustee diversity. An organisation like Governors for Schools might be able to help reach out to suitable candidates outside the school community, and the Chair would be interested in Trustees thoughts on this. Another possibility would be to organise a school focus group, perhaps around the area of culture, which might help to engage more diverse parts of the school community. **ACTION: Trustees to share thoughts with the Chair.**

8 **MAT update** – it was confirmed that there had been no new developments, but the item would remain as a standing item on FTB agendas.

9 **Chair's Action/Part II items/Other matters** – Trustees had been made aware of the request to change the CIF bid partner from Synergy to MAC, which Frank Gainsbury was recommending. Having noted that due diligence had been carried out as far as possible, that nothing would be owed to Synergy and that MAC had a very good reputation in terms of being successful at appeals, it was AGREED that the school should use MAC.

The Governor Professional advised Trustees that new legal requirements for all company directors (ie Trustees) were coming into effect from 18 November, whereby everyone would be required to prove their identity and would then be given a personal code. These codes would have to be shared with the Governance Professional in order to file the company confirmation statement in February. Failure to do so would lead to a fine for the school. Further details would be shared as soon as they became available in mid-November.

The Chair asked Andy Colgate, as Staff Voice, for his impressions on the start of term. Andy noted that the children were enjoying the new climbing frame; the lockers were working well and had helped change the dynamics around cloakroom areas; the children were very positive; teacher changes had been smooth; and support for 1:1s was working well, in part due to the input from the Inclusion Manager to facilitate a smooth handover from last year.

10 **Dates of next meeting**

Tuesday, 2 December @ 9.30am (includes Accounts) – confirmed

The meeting then closed at 8.40pm.

Signed:

Chair of Trustees

2 December 2025